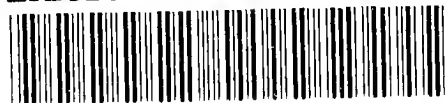


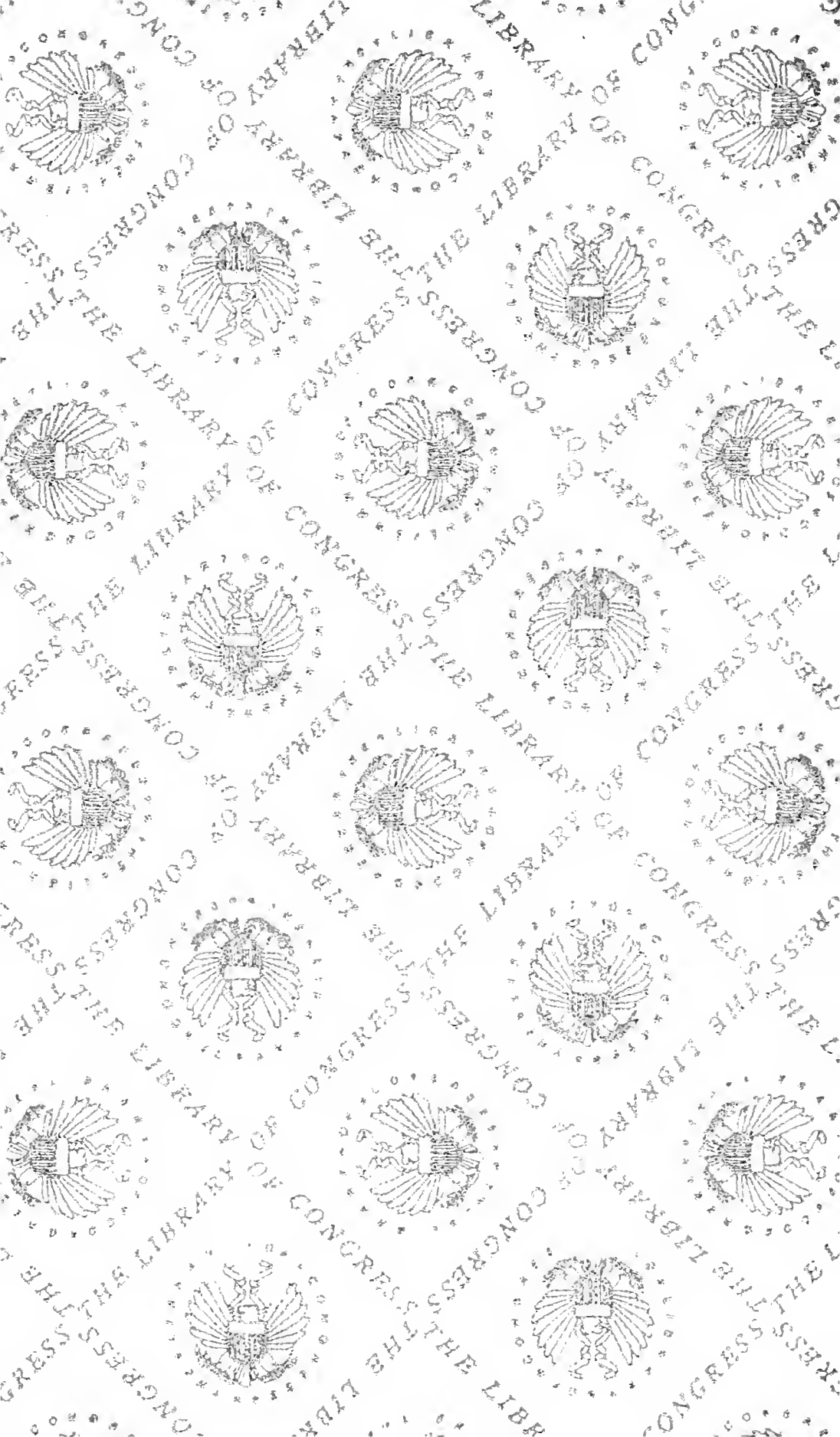
PS 3539
.R92 S6

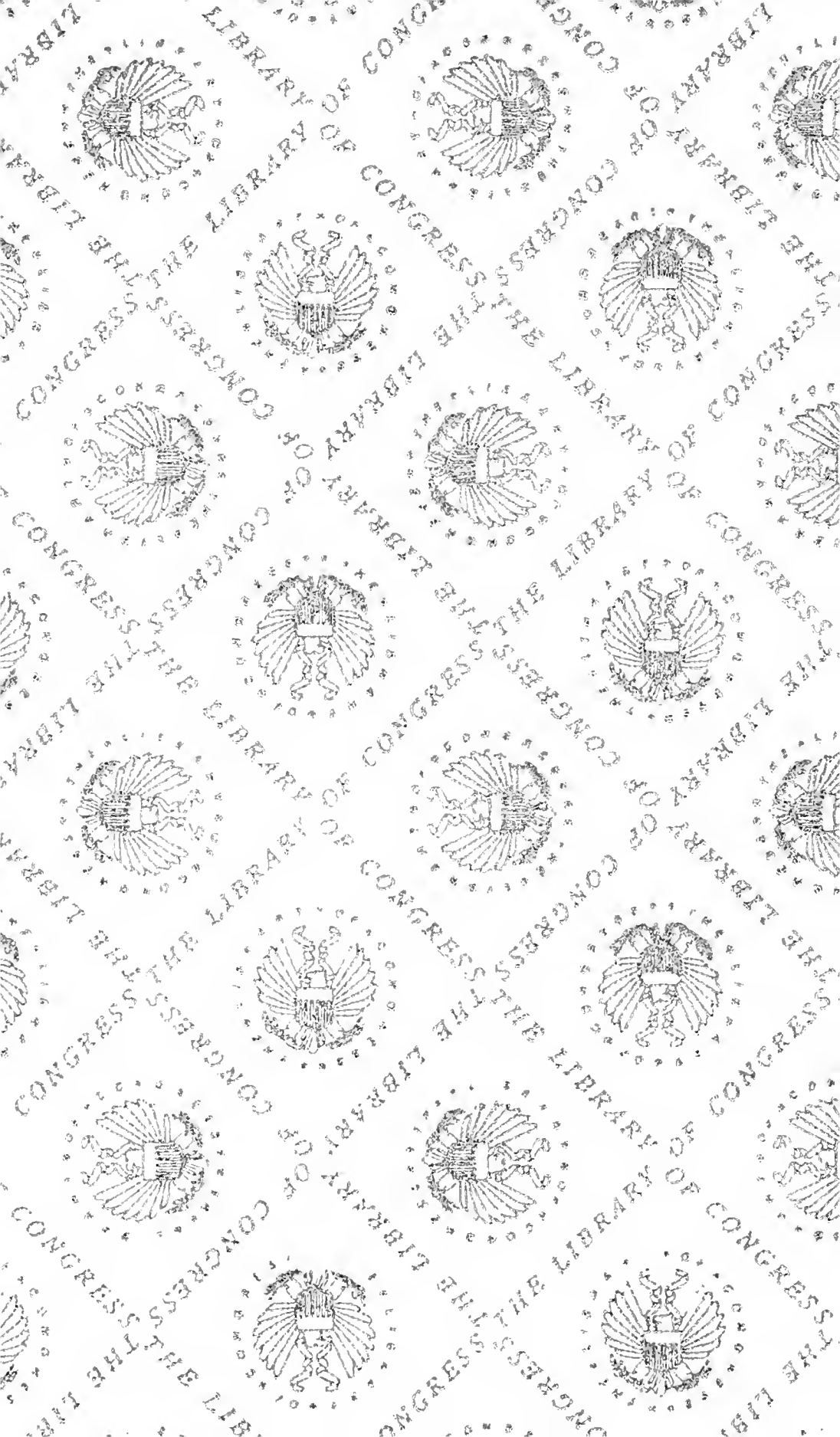
1911

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



00003420711







Ahurâ-Mazda,
Persia's ancient god:
What planets now revere
his lifted rod?

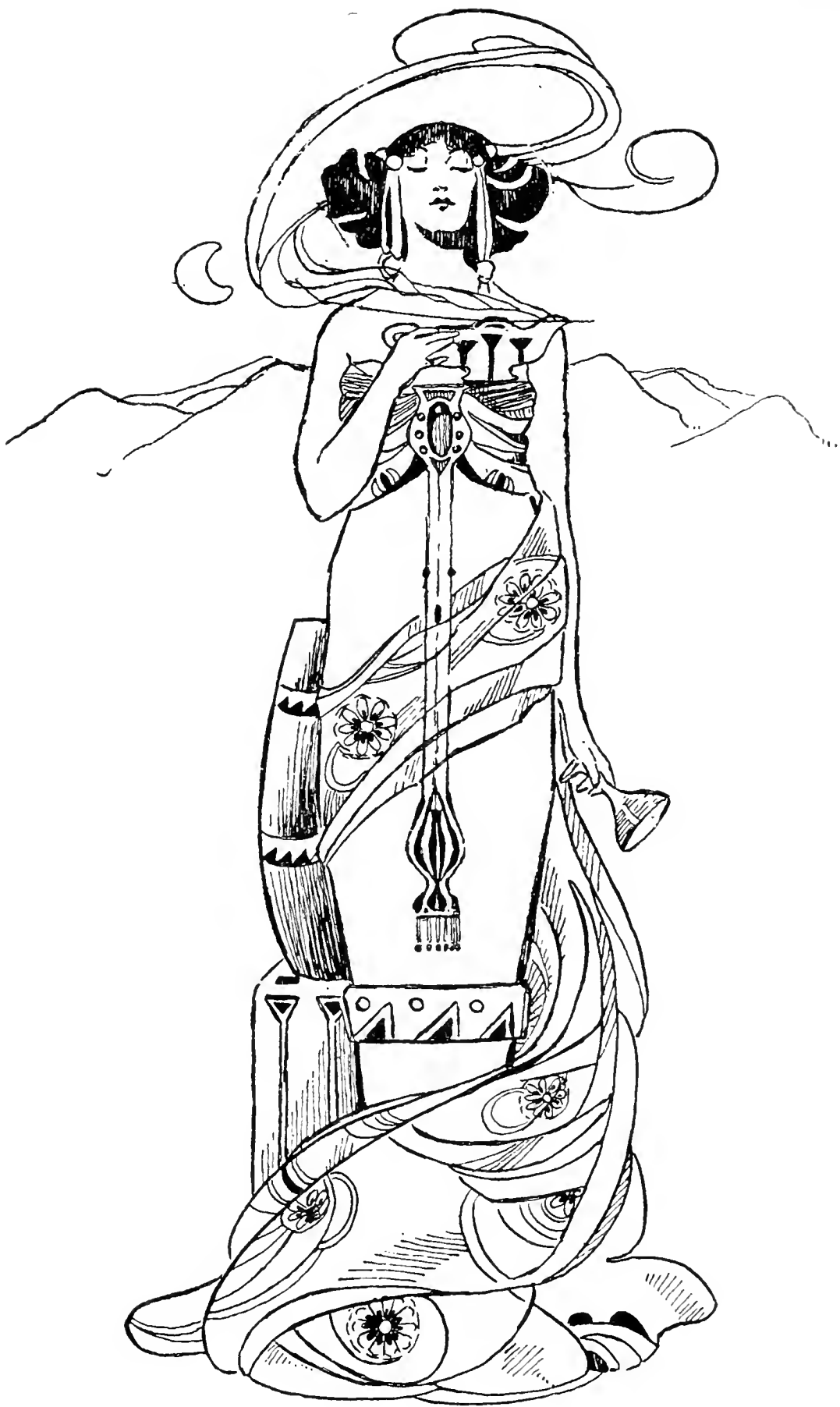


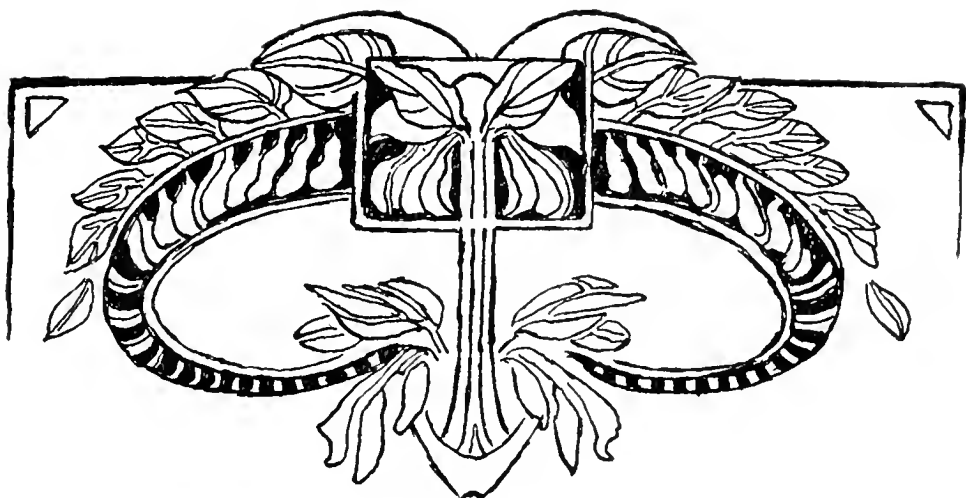


The Soul's Rubáiyát





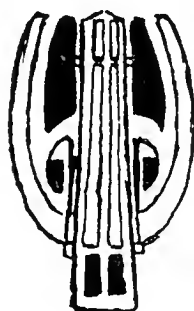




The Soul's Rubáiyát

Amelia Woodward Truesdell

Illustrated by
Marion De Lappé



San Francisco
A. M. Robertson
MCMXI





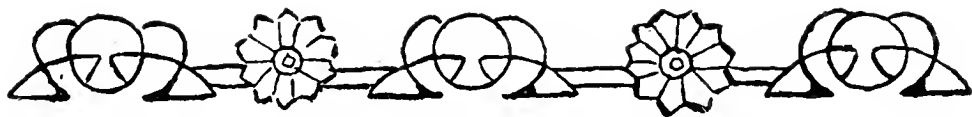
763539
1892

Copyright 1910
by
Amelia Woodward Truesdell

Printed by
The Stanley-Taylor Company
San Francisco



The Soul's Rubáiyát





*O Pars, awake! The humming-bird's
a-wing;*

*Still thrills the nightingale's sweet
welcoming.*

*Lo, from the hills—the Spring, her hair
snow-splashed!*

*Rose gardens burst to wildest
blossoming.*

*But night owls hoot around Persepolis;
Where jeweled feet have trod, the
serpents hiss;*

*To these dead halls there comes no
Springtime bliss:*

*My time-old search for truth is but as
this.*

*This quest sung he who took the Vine
to Spouse;*

*Nay Pars, why from thy thousand
dreams arouse?*

*If dark thine ancient doors, where
dwells the light?*

*In Omar's harp, why wake despair's
carouse?*





The Soul's Rubáiyát

Part I

I

Of him who walked a thousand years
ago

In Persian vales, and studied human woe
And the great Ruler's scheme to man, I
read

And wondered if aught more to-day we
know;

Aught more, life's puzzle-riddle solve
than he;

The Whence, the Why, the Whither, and
To-Be.

We still are groping for the Great
Reply;

Through veils and forms, O God, we
search for Thee.



II

He taught beneath the rose-trees of Irán,
This poet, seer, philosopher; this man
Who spared not all his learning's
treasure trove.

But vain his wisdom of the star-writ
plan!

Still would the multitude, like driven
swine,
On superstition feed, and call it wine
Of life, though bitter with the creeds
of men;
For sleek Tradition cried, "A draught
divine!"

III

Tradition! Serpent-born at Eden's gate,
Still deifying fetish, faith, and fate;
On altars strange, his false lights
burning yet,
Still blind men's eyes unto their high
estate.



Tradition! Keeper of the deadly keys
Where souls are locked in darkness, fed
 on lees
Of legends steeped in dreams, dank
 cloister weeds:
O God, how could'st Thou look and
 suffer these?

IV

From wading in the muck of daily care,
From 'midst the ashes of dead hopes'
 despair,
Our souls still wait, with long endurance
 dull,
And lifting helpless hands cry "Master,
 where?"

"A score of centuries since Jesus died,
And Sin our daily comrade still?" we
 cried.

His life! And could it be in vain?
 Then weep,
Weep on thou mother of the Crucified!



V

I loved the high Ideal I called the Lord;
I worshiped at that shrine with heart's
accord.

Athwart the altar trailed a serpent Doubt,
And left envenomed there the name of
God.

With the Almighty would you make a
trade,
As with a huckster by the road-side
paid?
So much salvation for so much shed
blood,
And thus your own just penalty evade?

The soul revolts at such a sacrifice,
Such banal temporizing with a vice;
The sweetest life the world has ever
known
Is lost to earth for me—unworth the
price?



Who then shall weigh the thing we call
a sin?

For ages God mayhap to man has been
More lenient than His sons. He knows
so well

How weak He made him from without,
—within.

VI

All consecration knows the scourge: the
scorn

Of words which cuts the heart as did
the thorn

The Master's brow; and through a
dolorous way

It mounts its calvary of crosses borne.

Vicarious ever is earth's pain; that pain,
The life-sweat of one body's loss or
gain.

None stands alone. Each hapless child
of sin

Is linked to me. See that 'tis not in
vain.



VII

From Ark of the old faith my soul went
out.

Philosophy she skimmed, that sea of
doubt,—

But eddyng circles in a darkening
whirl,

Maelstrom of words! It was a sorry
bout.

Where ancient Nilus and the Indus
taught;

Confucius with his measured wisdom
wrought,—

No foot-stay there, no olive-branch I
found;

But wreckage of a flood of surging
thought.

Through mosque and Buddhist temple,
silence-shod,

To fires of old Irán and budding rod
Of Aaron, back the devious way I trod;
And lo! I found me many a Sphinx-like
god.



But all their lips in silence were and
scorn,

At my poor search through shrines
where ages gone

Had left their manual of a bootless
quest:

For them, no star of some new faith
unborn!

Altars and tombs showed man in tragic
fray

Of creeds, but still the slave of
yesterday;

His dread of change, slow death unto
the faiths.

Better a red-robed charlatan at play!

VIII

And still the Potter's wheel is turned by
Fate:

He tosses out our shards of love and
hate

As whirls the clay about. We wonder why
We hold such scraps and shreds for our
estate.



Sharp-edgéd tools within an infant's hand!
These passions which we did not
understand
Surprised us by their mastery. Then who
Had right for us, such dangers to
command?

Did Cain, that life was sacred
comprehend?
Then why distraught when he, without a
friend,
Went forth? Did Judas know his kiss
of death
Would mark *for him*, of heaven and
earth the end?

IX

For Truth I searched a hundred seas
and lands;
I heard his call and ran with
outstretched hands;
But when I thought I had his foot-
steps traced,
He just had gone to walk on other
strands.



All up and down the streets and
country roads,
I asked for him. Men pointed to the
loads
Upon their backs and dumbly plodded on.
These body needs—accurséd Eden goads!

X

Within the dark I heard a voice one
night,
And all the air was vibrant with the
light,—
Some thought that crashed its zigzag
way; and then
An Error's mocking laugh. The ribald
wight!

I thought one day I'd caught his
beckoning glance;
Covered with light—Transfiguration's
trance—
I stood with souls in white. I raised my
eyes,
Then hope was naught but memory of a
chance.



XI

We read that Truth from one eternal
place
To us shall ever turn a changeless face,
A phantom mirror in his hand forsooth;
Of yesterday, to-day reflects no trace.

For Science changes every hour her
schemes;
Empiric! What to-day as fact she deems,
Next year is refuse by the wayside flung;
For souls in mortal need, what good are
dreams?

XII

I questioned Nature for some comfort-
screed;
For high analogies; God's word and
deed
Must blend in one great scheme of law.
Quoth she
"The individual is a worthless weed."



The specie life with its unbroken train
Is Nature's god; and this for souls in
pain?

As cold as death she reads her cruel
creed:

"You're weak? Then pass; the
strongest must remain."

XIII

It is the old estate of me and thee;
Dividual life lost in captivity
Unto the whole. "What means the
world to me?"

Thus Omar cried. The end? Earth
waits to see.

Since his red wine a thousand years of
work;

Its bold results our logic may not shirk.
But of God's mind to man,—the Unit-
Soul?

Says Nature's law, "Away with shrine
and kirk."



XIV

O Truth! Bemasked with smirk of
every race
Thy brow! How shall we know thine
alien face
By strange device of old and new
disguised?
Yet souls distraught still seek thy
dwelling-place.

We would believe thy hidden brow is
bright,
Immortal reflex of the Essence, Light.
Why change thy raiment with the
beggar Doubt,
With all her shams and trumpery
bedight?

Too faint thy image is in science' well
Thy mark uncertain as the sagas tell.
O Truth, tear off thy masks, and pray
make haste,
Or Doubt shall cast us into deepest hell.



XV

O for Ithuriel's heaven-tempered spear!
Some spirit talisman that's crystal-clear!
Encased within this casket of dull clay,
What chance has man the truth to know
or hear?

Silent, Thou God, as Thy unanswering
sky,
Perhaps sometime, Thou'lt tell Thy
creatures why
The true and false are dual-unity.
And now, have mercy if in sin we die.

XVI

Since Death turned down the Persian's
empty glass,
The sun has seen the train of centuries
pass;
Uncertain-lipped, we question still the
law,
And still to us the heavens are as brass.



And when the past has swallowed up
to-day,
The future from us stolen nigh away,
We feel the shiver of the river-brink,
Ah, then forsooth we'll grovel,
whining, pray!

Aye, pray to one we never have
addressed;
Reach for the cup our lips have passed
unpressed;
See heaven shrivel and shrink above our
heads;
Ye Moths!—my kin! Where shall we
then, unblessed?

XVII

My soul go hence! This strife is idle
hum;
This life the beating of an empty drum;
A Holy Grail vanished is this Truth.
Back to thy nothingness! Thou slave,
be dumb.



And when again th' Eternal Sákis use
This earthen bowl I found, but did not
 choose,
Still other bubbles in to pour, its clay
The flavor of mortality may lose.

XVIII

Will its new lips be only formed to
 sigh?
Our questions, will it face with dreary
 eye?
Nay, nay, I've wept its tears, this
 beaten clay;
For man will then have come the Great
 Reply?

Beneath this star-splashed, zodiac-painted
 bowl
Down-pressed, we crawl with smothering
 of soul;
Is it uplifted for the Súfi seer
Whose tragic songs to us through
 centuries roll?



XIX

Omar! Ah, do you yet the mystery
know?

Is Death a Fakir with no wonder-show?
Or have the Pleiads now no room for
souls,
The I, the You, diffused in ether-flow?

Through space as winds Death's
caravan its train,
Have you aught sweeter found than
earth-love's pain?

Flesh-robe of sorrow must you wear
again?

Why dream I, mad? All dreams for
man are vain.



The Soul's Rubáiyát

Part II

I

The I, the Creature Man, unto my soul:
"Would'st look within the Ruler's great
Earth-Scroll?

The folded centuries up-gather then;
By History's torch new-lit, the tale
unroll.

" 'Tis travail and the sweat of blood for
thee;

The fixed stars of belief reel drunkenly;
Thy sun is blotted out; *thy* God
eclipsed;

Go find us life; this chaos strangles me.



II

“Rugged the moutains round thy
 pathway close;
From peak to peak, far-glittering with
 the snows
Of Reason’s eyrie home. In what deep
 hell
Beside thee Doubt, with torch inverted,
 goes.

“Through legend-vales thou’lt follow pale
 Despair;
Doubt’s poisonous night-shade, but no
 hope-ray there.
When plaints the ringdove for her Yúsuf
 lost,
Thou soul, alone, wilt echo ‘Where, O
 where?’

“But oh! through stress, lose not thy
 God; no God?
Rather I’d be again my native clod;
Would set thee free from this earth-
 hampered flight.
Make haste: I see too near the broken
 sod.



“Press on till bulbuls to the lark repeat
Thy prayer, thine incense for the
 heavenly seat;
Till thou with morning’s messenger
 canst sing
‘ ’Tis there!’—red roses crushing at thy
 feet.

III

“Set up thine altar then, emblazoned
 TRUTH,—
The IN HOC SALUS of thy faith
 forsooth;
And thy libations pour, my heart’s best
 wine;
There sacrifice the treasures of my
 youth.

“Thy JESUS HOMINUM SALVATOR
 too,
This shrine may prove,—those altar-
 legends true;
As from the dying seed new breath
 suspairs,
From faith’s dead husks Christ-life may
 spring anew.



IV

“Stand up before thine altar now and
swear,
Thou priestess Soul, that to our God
Thou’lt bare
Thy brow unto whatever name be true;
Forgotten be the seal it used to wear.

“Thou’lt flinch not when old altars fall
to naught.
Theologies stripped to the quick of
thought,
And faiths, the sinews of thy life,
inwrought
With thy heart-threads, thou’lt give for
freedom bought:

“ ’Tis spirit-vision with the single view,
A talisman to test the false and true.
No double thought; no judgment in
reserve;
Mammon or God; thou can’st not serve
the two.



V

That thou wilt do all this for thee and
me,
Swear it, as there is love 'twixt me and
thee.”
And as she passed, my heart wept bitterly:
Yet 'tis man's only hope that thought
be free.

But oh! the hurt when old beliefs are rent
From lives by church-yard door-ways
long content:
O dogmas sacred as the mother's breast!
Make haste with healing lest the years
be spent.

* * * * *

VI

She came. Her step scarce moved her
vestments' fold.
The law was written in her lips' stern
mould;
I cried aloud, “O my beloved speak.”
Far off her voice; her eyes were deep
and old.

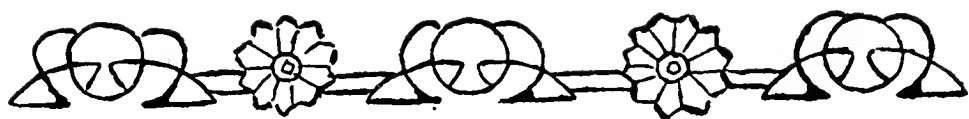


VII

“Two graven tablets found I by the
way:
One chiseled by the Past, one by To-day:
All faiths must read by these or else we
say,
‘Perhaps the master-gravers were at
play.’

“History and Science—friendly scribes,
if reads
The reader well; they mark man’s
changing meeds.
When Knowledge swings the world in
line with law,
She’ll show God’s purpose to the human
needs.

“For individual lives, encrusted long
In chrysalis of creeds, are with a song
And spread of wings outbursting to the
hope
That Fear as fetish is a primal wrong.



VIII

“These crowds that with a nation’s
vigor burned,
Whose souls for truth of their Creator
yearned;
They sought a Christ but found
Tradition’s hell;
What wonder if to God-distrust they
turned?

“But sons of God, the seal is on them all;
Not potsherds set in rows against the wall.
With errors drugged, they stir as men
in sleep;
New life a-thrill, they would shake off
the thrall.”

IX

“Yea soul, but veinings of a leaflet’s plan
Go read,” I cried. “From it the Maker
scan.
The individual, what is *he* to God?
O tragedy of him, the Unit-Man!”



X

And long I waited while she wandered
—where?

* * * * *

Far off I saw her, resurrection fair
Of form; her face a glory from within;
I knew she had with spirits swept the
air.

“’Tis Love,” she cried. “A heart of
love the key
That opens now the one life-truth to
thee;
That God is love to man, and only love,
To His own children whom He would
make free.

“In lights sur’fine—the tints from
desert sands—
Beside me stood a man with piercéd
hands,
His brightness shaded by the mantling
sun;
His voice,—no sound so sweet on
summer strands.



XI

*“ ‘Man is not left alone upon the sod
Of earth, his home, though often weary
trod;*

*God’s amulet of love, within he bears;
No heart that loves can ever lose its
God.*

*“ ‘And when thou bearest to the river-
brink*

*Thy talisman of love, thou shalt not
shrink;*

*And there the Angel of eternal life
‘Shall lift her Cup o’er-flowed, and bid
thee drink.’*

XII

*“And he was gone. The Mother-Earth
looked up,*

*A twilight on her face; the hasty sup
Of sweetness, fragrant on the desert air;
Earth sighed for yet a cup—a brimming
Cup.*



“A tender mantle of his thought to thee
Fell on me as he passed. Love gives
thee free
Salvation from the ‘Body of this death,’
The world-old fetish, dread of God’s
decree.

XIII

“Even as on Judea’s mountain-side
He spake. And then I knew with
vision wide,
Not lore occult nor dogmas complicate
Made of the Nazarine, the Crucified.

“But patience meeting wrong with
meekness mild;
Simplicity with wisdom of a child;
And charity’s clean hand that cast no
stone,
And raised the weeping Mary, undefiled.



“It is the *spirit* of the Master’s thought;
Not deep developments, by scholars
wrought
Of doctrines that would shrivel on the lips
Which ‘Peace and good-will’ from the
manger brought.

“Spirit of love all human and divine;
One chalice ruby with his heart’s red
wine,
From lip to lip, the Rabbin then shall
pass
In mosque-cathedral-temple, one pure
shrine.

XIV

“And there shall come a time of
Pentecost
To thee upon thy homeward way, but
lost;
When ‘tongues of fire,’ a spirit flame,
the *truth*
For thee, shall heal thy heart, sore
question-tossed.



“Then life shall be an Olivet of peace,
And from its height thy vision shall
 increase
To unknown kingdoms of His love and
 joy,
Till doubts like waves on a dead sea
 shall cease.

“Be it Love’s Zion-heights immortalized,
Be it Gethsemanes pain-solemnized,
Be it the cross of life-hopes sacrificed,
Thine eyes shall see the fields
 emparadised.”

XV

She ceased. And from her eyes’
 uplifted sight
A splendor filled the deepness of the
 night:
Oh, mantle of the hope that covered me!
O Truth, the glory of that desert light!



XVI

“Accept defeat as to Creation’s plan,”
I cried. “There is no other peace for
man.

The *De Profundis* of a life is this,—
Would god be God if I His will could
scan?

“Now in the sun I set the bowl to-day:
What matter be it brazen bowl or clay?
It gathered up the light of yesterday;
To-morrow it shall draw a brighter ray.

XVII

“Once Ramoth scoffed and clashed the
heavenly keys;
One door defied his hand. ‘What then
are these?
Insult from Him?’ he cried. Then
Astrofel,
‘The mystery of His Godhead would’s’t
thou seize?’

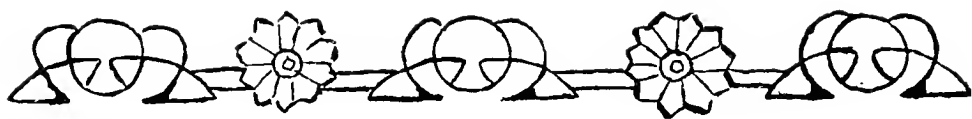


“So I, the Self, this terror-stricken lord
Of earth who is afraid to meet his God,
Upon th’ Eternal Sword would lay a
 hand,
And would compel th’ Almighty’s final
 Word.

XVIII

“Forever vanished now the great
 god Fear;
Released his captives, to the daylight-
 cheer.
Gone too, the little gods of fretting
 creeds;
But Love remains and God is there—is
 here.

“I see men perjured, mad with lust of
 fame;
I see them reeking with the gutter’s
 shame.
Behold! they rise and call upon God’s
 name;
For Fear lives not, but Love with eyes
 of flame.”



XIX

O Love, our refuge in earth's wildest
storm!

O Service, life-breath of a heart that's
warm!

A dual-unity, of heaven born;
For love is service in its highest form.

Flame-tints that shimmer on the desert
air!

Love-lights that make Life's sands a
garden fair,

Where joy and pain sing softly to the
soul

That God in man is Love in human
care.







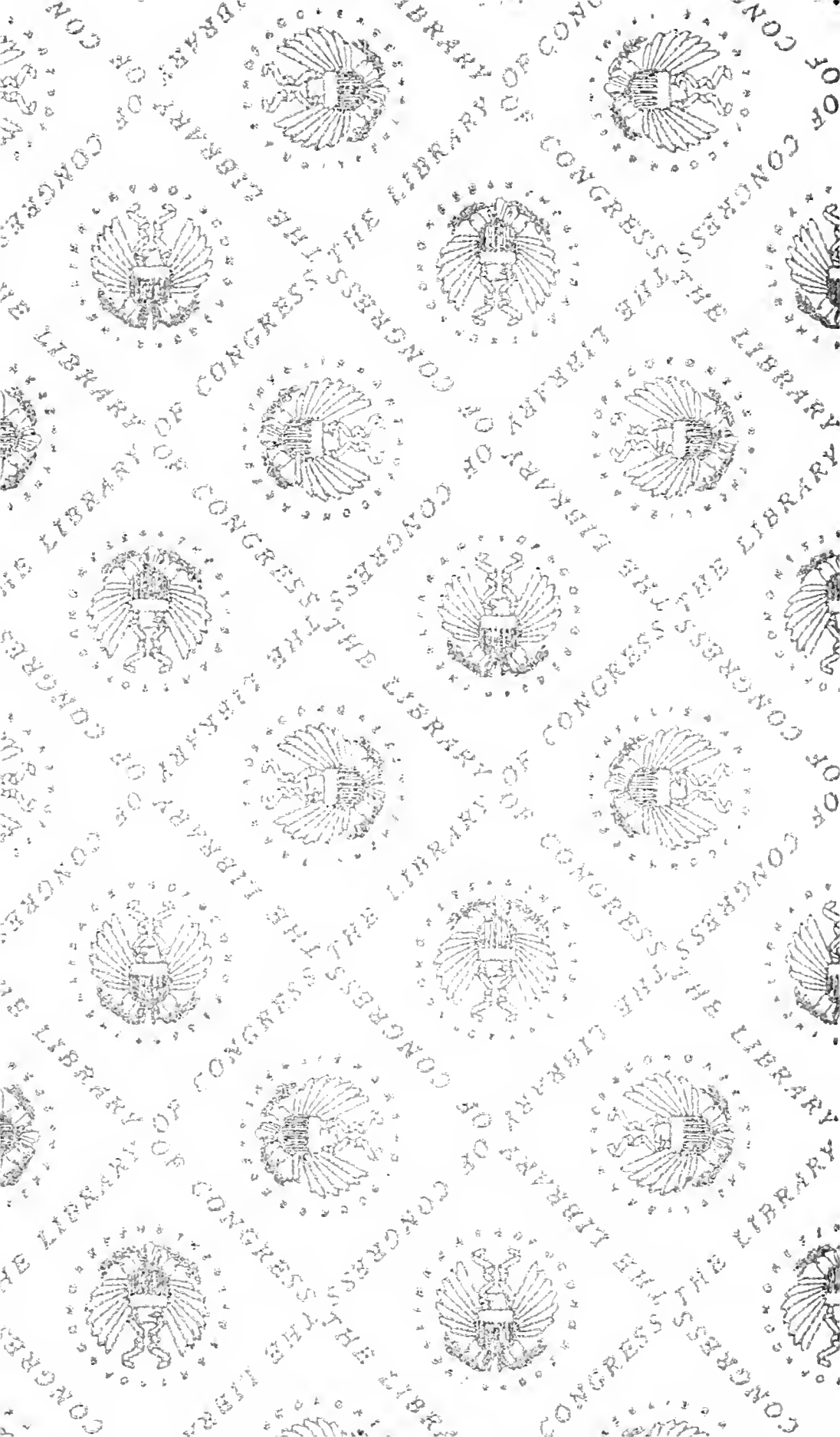




Fire altars

whence the sacred flame
has fled;

Round them no more, the
reverent feet shall tread.



WERT
BOOKBINDING
Grantville, Pa.
Nov-Dec 1988
We're Quality Bound

